



## **INShape 150 - Week 2 Jumping Rope**

From the playground into your fitness routine

Last week we mentioned jumping rope as a warm-up prior to your workout. Jumping rope is also considered to be one of the best forms of aerobic activity. It's probably been a long time since you were on the playground skipping rope with friends, but if you are looking for a cheap, yet effective, cardio workout, jumping rope is the answer.

Beginning a jump rope program can be a bit frustrating no matter what your fitness level. Finding your rhythm may take some time. Settle into a comfortable pace and try to vary your foot work. The key is to start slowly and build to a faster pace. Begin with 10 minute intervals, and increase your time as your coordination and endurance improve. Once you find your groove you will quickly notice the aerobic benefit of jumping rope.



Jumping rope is also calorie burning powerhouse. One hour of jumping rope at a reasonable pace can burn up to 800 calories, and 10 minutes of jumping is the equivalent of running one mile. Not only does jumping rope provide a great cardio workout, but it strengthens the back, glutes, shoulders, abs, chest and

arms. Those who are looking for low impact cardio exercises might be surprised that jumping rope is a perfect option. Jumping rope is a low impact movement that exerts less stress on the joints than running or jogging. Since both of your feet are hitting the ground at the same time your calf muscles absorb most of the impact, taking the stress off of your joints.

Follow these basic tips for incorporating jumping rope into your workouts.

- To lower impact, choose a wood or padded floor as your workout area and wear cross-training shoes.
- Start by using a 9-foot adjustable speed rope. Step on the center of the rope with one foot and pull the handles up to about the top of your shoulders. Shortening the rope will increase the speed between revolutions.
- Jump only high enough to clear the rope and land on the balls of your feet.
- Keep your elbows in and your forearms out at about a 45 degree angle, spinning the rope with your wrists. [Click here for a quick demo.](#)

Stick with it until you find your rhythm. It is not uncommon to experience frequent starts and stops. Your coordination will improve with time, and the benefits will be well worth the effort.

Jumping rope is an easy solution when looking to increase your heart rate during short 10 minute workouts. There are no excuses as this exercise is cost effective (ropes cost \$10-\$20), requires minimal space, can be done anywhere, and by fitness level. Give it a try and find out how quick and effective this workout can be.

## **Eight Foods You Didn't Know You Could (and Should) be Eating!**

### **Agave Nectar**

For those of us who are trying to eat a low-sugar diet our options can often seem limited. Many individuals don't like the prospect of turning to artificial sweeteners and limit themselves to honey. The next time



you want a steaming cup of tea with a hint of sweetness, there's another solution for you. You may have heard about stevia, the sweet herb, but how about agave? Agave is a desert plant similar to the yucca. Agave is used to produce a wide variety of products including a sweet syrup known as agave nectar.

Agave nectar is a natural sweetener that has several other health benefits. Because of its antibacterial and moisture-resistant properties, the Aztecs used a mixture of agave nectar and salt as a dressing for wounds and a balm for skin infections. Agave nectar also has a very favorable glycemic profile. This means that the carbohydrates in agave nectar will provide sweetness without spiking your blood sugar the way refined sugars can. Its sweetness comes from a complex form of fructose called inulin (in the carbohydrate world, the more "complex" the

better!). Agave nectar has a consistency similar to honey; however, it has a very different and more neutral flavor.

Are you a newbie to the world of agave? Here are some easy ways to start using it:

- **Power Breakfast:** As we mentioned last week, Greek yogurt, a small handful of walnuts, and a touch of agave nectar on top makes a quick and easy breakfast.
- **Fabulous Fruit Salad:** mix a small amount of agave nectar, lemon juice, and some shreds of fresh mint or basil as a dressing for a fabulous fruit salad (delicious with any citrus fruits, berries, or melons).
- **Tropical Sweet Parfait:** Stir together Greek yogurt and desired amount of light agave nectar. In a parfait glass, layer yogurt mixture, fresh pineapple, and some natural (unsweetened) coconut flakes. Repeat layers and top with toasted almonds.
- **Garden Water:** Take two slices of grapefruit, oranges, lemons, limes, and cucumbers (yes, I said cucumbers!), and place into a pitcher with cool ice water. Add agave nectar to desired sweetness for a refreshing summer drink. Keep in the refrigerator, and Garden Water will taste even better the next day!

## Community Corner

### Highlighted fitness events from around the state

**Event:** Aging & Community Services of Southern Indiana

**Date:** Several dates throughout the state

**Location:** Numerous locations throughout the state

**More event info:** [www.agingandcommunityservices.org](http://www.agingandcommunityservices.org)

**Event:** Walk with IMPD

**Date:** April 27-May 23, 2009

**Location:** Washington Park Family Center

**More event info:** Contact Annie Kern at 317-327-6265 for more information

**Event:** Jay Cooperider Memorial 5K

**Date:** May 9, 2009

**Location:** West Lafayette at Cumberland Park

**More event info:** [www.jcm5k.com](http://www.jcm5k.com)

**Event:** 5K Faith Run/Walk

**Date:** May 18, 2008

**Location:** Lebanon Memorial Park

**More event info:** [www.kenlongassoc.com](http://www.kenlongassoc.com)